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ABSTRACT

This theme issue of the Bernard van Leer Foundation newsletter focuses on the problem of teenage pregnancy and teenage parenthood in developing and developed nations, and examines the problems that teenage mothers face in different societies. It explores societal norms and values related to teenage parenting; the effects of teenage parents on children; socioeconomic circumstances related to teenage pregnancy; teenage marriage; pregnancy prevention programs; sex education; educational attitudes; self-esteem; and public policy. Separate sections focus on: (1) societal attitudes toward teenage pregnancy and parenthood in Kenya; (2) the experiences of a teenage mother in Ireland and the work of the Togher Family Centre in Cork; (3) the activities of the Vicaria de la Pastoral Social program in Chile, which is designed to improve the overall development of young children; (4) the Teenage Mothers Project in May Pen, Jamaica, which seeks to improve the prospects of teenage mothers and their children through education and job training; (5) the Adolescent Development Programme, a parenthood and sex education program in Trinidad; and (6) the Teen Parent Resource Center in New York City, which works with schools and other institutions to present pregnancy prevention and parenthood education programs. Contains 24 references. (MDM)

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Targetting teenagers

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The photograph above right, and on pages 3 and 5, are taken from publications of the Teenage Mothers Project, Jamaica

Why is teenage parenting so often perceived as a problem? Why do attitudes towards young mothers vary so much between, and even within, countries? To what extent is our behaviour the result of changing norms and values?

Posing the questions is easy enough; finding answers calls for a survey of attitudes, beliefs and practices across the world. Although there are some aspects of teenage parenting that are universal, many others are applicable in only specific countries or cultures. All that we can attempt to do in this *Newsletter* article is to draw attention to some of the main issues, and draw together a little of the evidence.

Where there is a concern with teenage parenting it should focus on the fact that for many young mothers, pregnancy is both **unwanted** and **unwelcome.** There are two separate aspects involved here:

- the pregnancy is culturally or developmentally inappropriate, and/or
- the pregnancy is physically and/or psychologically damaging to the young mother and her offspring.

'Culturally inappropriate' means that community tradition and practice assess that a woman is too

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young to bear children. The expression 'developmentally inappropriate' means the mothers' and infants' needs may be 'out of sync'. The term 'physically and psychologically damaging' implies that, regardless of local traditions and practices, there is a minimum age below which pregnancy is not only socially or developmentally inappropriate, but is positively harmful to both the mother and her infant.

over half the world's population is under 25

one in three people are aged 10-24

in many countries, more than half of the teenagers have unprotected penetrative sex before the age of 16

emotional pressure and physical violence are often used to force young people to have unwanted sex, especially girls

about one third of young women in Latin America and Asia, and over half in many African countries, have given birth by the age of 20

most deaths in 15-19 year old women are linked to pregnancy and childbirth

each year up to 5 million young women have abortions, usually illegally and in life-threatening conditions

Source: *AIDS action: the international newsletter on AIDS prevention and care*, 25, June-August 1994 AHRTAG London

Norms and values

In every society, there are norms and values that lay down when and under what circumstances it is acceptable for women to have children. In Africa, for example, some three quarters of all women are married by the age of 20.[1] In many Moslem countries, girls are married around the age of menarche. These young women may give birth to several children before they are 20 – indeed, the woman who reaches 21 without having had a child may be considered barren and unworthy of respect. As Shashi Bali in Kenya relates: 'not to have a child is the worst thing that can happen to a woman. But the children must be produced within marriage' (page 6).

In many parts of the world, it is **unmarried** teenage parenting that is perceived as a problem because it is culturally inappropriate and, despite the high value placed on pregnancy and childbirth, birth outside marriage is viewed with disapproval. The experience in Chile, where unmarried teenage mothers are still socially stigmatised, is described in the article on page 8.

It is apparent that norms and values are not only based in societies, cultures and religions, but they can change over time. This applies to age of marriage, desirability of marriage, desire for children, numbers of children, and attitudes to birth outside marriage.

Such norms are not, however, immutable. In Morocco between 1987 and 1992 the number of children per woman fell, the median age of marriage for women rose as did the age of bearing first children.[2] The mutability of norms is amply illustrated by the changes that have occurred in the UK. At the beginning of this century, marriage and childbearing was common among women under 20, while until the 1930s, unmarried women who gave birth were being locked away in institutions as 'mentally deficient' and their babies given away for adoption. Now, many fewer women marry in their teens and unmarried motherhood, although not universally approved, is an accepted part of life.

Effects on children

The evidence concerning the consequences for children of having young mothers is mixed. It is generally accepted that, biologically speaking, the late teens are the ideal years for childbearing. However, the years just before then are far from ideal – as the adolescent girl's body is still developing and growing, she is more likely to bear babies that are premature and/or underweight. Poised between childhood and adulthood herself, the young mother will not always have the emotional maturity needed to cope with a baby's demands and the realities of parenthood.

It is sometimes suggested that children of young mothers are more likely to be abandoned, to become street children, or to be abused. The evidence is scanty, but a study in a hospital in South Africa found that 66 per cent of abused children had mothers under 19 years of age: 'It is not necessarily the mothers themselves who do the abusing, but they are unable to cope and to protect their children: and they lack any support systems.'[3]

Other studies in Africa[4] have drawn attention to the problems of street children and abandoned babies as having their roots in the 'disorganisation of the family'. This has come about as a result of migrant labour systems, rapid population growth, civil war, violence and increasing urbanisation and Westernisation.

Socio-economic circumstances

Socio-economic circumstances are the background to much of the anxiety that is expressed about teenage parenthood. Lower birth weights and premature deliveries are not just an outcome of a mother who is too young, they are outcomes of poor nutrition, unsatisfactory housing and inadequate health care which come from poor socio-economic circumstances.

There is evidence from a number of countries which suggests that teenage motherhood is predominantly a feature of the poor. In the USA, for example, it is estimated that 83 per cent of teenagers giving birth are from poor families.[5] Although there is a tendency to view this as a 'black problem', births to white women under 20 are higher than in any other industrialised country. The proportion of these births that are to single women has increased from seven per cent in 1960 to 42 per cent in 1984.[6] In the UK, Ann Phoenix reports that 'The main feature that teenage mothers share tends to be their

material position. Early motherhood is predominantly a feature of the working classes."[7]

It is often suggested that young women in industrialised societies become pregnant in order to obtain housing or welfare benefits but the evidence does not bear this out. Studies in the USA have related trends in single parenthood to changes in welfare provisions and have shown that, contrary to expectations, rates of single parenthood increase when benefits do not and that reproductive trends are not related to welfare provisions.[8]

The 'need' for marriage

Despite the apparent desirability of marriage – either culturally, economically or both – the assumption that marriage to the child's father is a positive outcome needs to be treated with caution: sometimes the father is not a teenager but a much older man, or even a close relative. Of 135 fathers interviewed in 1989 by the Women's Centre in Jamaica, one-third were aged 14-18, more than half were between 19 and 24, one in ten were 25-40 and one in 50 between 40 and 50.[9] Whatever the age of the father, there is some evidence that marriage is a less desirable – or necessary – state than it once was.

Socio-economic changes at the macro level affect individual actions. The changes relate to the switch from an agriculture-based economy to a manufacturing-based one; to improved sanitation and health care that lead to increased life expectancy and better infant/child survival rates; and to improved educational opportunities for all children, but especially girls. These factors combine to mean that there is less 'need' for early marriage and as many children as possible. On the contrary, they are pointers to later marriage and fewer children – as witnessed in extreme form in China's 'one-child policy'.

The incidence of poverty is also related to marital status, but in the UK and the USA, it is often an inverse relationship. In both countries, high unemployment levels and the need for a more skilled workforce have led to a significant drop in employment rates for young men who are poorly educated. In Ann Phoenix' study of young mothers in London, the few women who married were those whose partners were relatively high earners – compared with other men who impregnate teenage women:

> High levels of unemployment and poor wages for young men are probably partly responsible for the decreasing proportion of young mothers who marry their children's fathers.[10]

Another UK study found that 75 per cent of single teenage mothers registered their babies jointly with the babies' fathers and that the majority of these couples were cohabiting.[11]

'Preventive' programmes

Programmes that set out to 'prevent' teenage pregnancy are too frequently based on the premise that the provision of information is sufficient. Naturally, ignorance is an important factor: ignorance concerning the biological facts of reproduction and lack of information about contraceptive methods (both traditional and modern). Also important are the lack of access to contraceptives and pressure from male partners. But there are other, more complex reasons.

Studies of teenage girls that look at sexual behaviour often find little difference in sexual activity between teenage girls who give birth and those that do not. The latter will tend to take more care in the use of contraception and also be more willing to have abortions when contraception fails. In Hungary, the number of births to under 18s decreased between 1980 and 1990 but the number of pregnancies actually rose slightly – those deciding to give birth, whether married or single, came from the lower socio-economic groups and had a lower level of education.[12]

A 1991 South African study found that 85 per cent of teenage girls were not using any form of contraception although 66 per cent 'had some prior information on how to prevent pregnancy'. The authors contend that these adolescents are 'handicapped by their youth, low level of education and a general lack of understanding of the relationship between the onset of menarche, sexual activity, conception and contraception.'[13]

A US survey found that 70 per cent of teenagers interviewed were sexually active by the age of 18 and that the average age of first sexual experience was 14 1/2. Although eight out of 10 of those interviewed claimed to know about contraception, only one in four had used it during their first sexual experience.[14]

Sex education

In many societies it is believed that education about sexual matters actually encourages sexual activity and experimentation. One review of 19 studies found that in none of them 'was sex education found to lead to earlier or increased sexual activity'.[15] The Netherlands is often quoted as an example in that it 'boasts a very low teenage pregnancy rate due to broader, more open social attitudes, a generous approach to sex education in schools and contraceptive services widely available to young people.'[16] The same theme was taken up in an editorial in the British Journal of Family Planning which refers to the 'positive approach' of the Netherlands which results in teenage abortion

rates that are one-third lower than in the UK where consumer surveys have shown that:

> 44 per cent of teenagers could not get an appointment with a family planning clinic within one week, and that staff warded off 12 per cent by their disapproving attitudes ... Yet UK society bombards children with sexual images in advertising and the media but frowns upon contraception advertising and sex education. This serves to perpetuate the misinformation teenagers have about sex.[17]

In the USA there is still an unresolved debate over whether the primary focus of programmes should be the discouragement of teenage sexual activity or a reduction in teenage pregnancies (page 12). The debate continues despite earlier sexual maturity, changes in marriage patterns, the constant bombardment of sexual imagery from the mass media, and the undisputed evidence of sexual activity among young people. The consequence is that programmes that attempt to educate children about their bodies, reproduction and family life face strong opposition.

Teenage parents do not all fit neatly into one category. We need to distinguish between:

teenage mothers and single mothers

older teens and younger teens

acceptability and the norms of society

planned pregnancies and unplanned pregnancies

birth rates and pregnancy rates

historical perspectives and the context of parenting

In Mexico, however, 90 per cent of parents interviewed in a nationwide poll said that sex education and family education should be taught from the first grade, and two new courses developed in schools are meeting approval from students, teachers and parents. Developed by the *Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población*, the courses are called 'Planning your life' and 'Adolescence and development'. One of the main findings from an evaluation of the initial 'Planning your life' course was that:

> of the 21 females and 144 males who acknowledged having had sex at the time the course began, a significantly larger proportion were using contraception at follow up, compared with sexually active students in the control group. The findings were similar among those who had not had sex at the baseline but who reported having done so by follow-up.

The findings led to a new General Education Law passed in 1993 that encourages 'the creation of consciousness regarding the preservation of health, family planning and responsible parenthood'.[18]

A lack of commitment to education

In many respects, it seems to be education as such that makes a difference, not just education about reproduction or family life. In Canada, a study of 39 teenage mothers and 35 non-mothers found few differences in sexual activity between the two groups, but 62 per cent of the mothers had dropped out of school **before** becoming pregnant and a further 15 per cent after, implying what the authors describe as 'a lack of commitment to education'.[19] There are similar findings from studies in the USA, the UK, the Caribbean and elsewhere.

This 'lack of commitment' to education is connected to what have been described as the most powerful contraceptives of all – education, employment and self-esteem. And it is these factors which need to be tackled if societies wish to reduce the number of 'unwanted and unwelcome' teenage pregnancies. Programmes in May Pen, Jamaica and New York, USA (see pages 10 and 12) ensure that teenage mothers get every encouragement and assistance to complete their education. The objective is for the young mothers to enhance their self-esteem, gain qualification and, ultimately, be able to support themselves and their children. The hope is that they will delay further childbearing and that their own children, both female and male, will not repeat the pattern of early parenthood. Mothers' attitude to education is particularly important in the light of findings that many parents feel alienated from schools because of their own experiences and because of differing cultural attitudes. This has effects on their interest and involvement in their own children's education.[20]

The importance of motherhood

Having a child can, in fact, change a young mother's aspirations – a US survey of teenage mothers found that: 'having a baby has given many of these young women a new and much-needed focus in life'.[21]

We should not, however, make the assumption that all women aspire to higher education and/or paid careers. The majority of the young women in the Jamaican Teenage Mothers Project do not have academic potential and need help with literacy and practical skills (page 10). Similarly in the UK, a study that followed up young mothers 21 months after birth reported that 'For all the women, motherhood was at least as important a career as (and for many women more important than) employment.', while for others, 'the young women did not perceive motherhood as permanently limiting' and it was a spur to get qualifications and employment.[22]

There are some findings from long-term studies that give grounds for optimism. It appears from them that teenage parenthood does not **inevitably** lead to poor outcomes. Women who gave birth at 17 in Baltimore, USA were followed up 17 years later when, in general, their situation had improved 'significantly'. Only one quarter were on welfare, most job holders were regularly employed and about a quarter had 'moved from poverty to the middle class'. In all cases, the level of general education played a significant role.[23]

Another American study followed all the people born on a Hawaiian island in 1955. By 18 years of age, 28 girls had become mothers and all reported a lack of faith in the efficacy of their own efforts and lack of self-esteem. By the age of 31/32, 60 per cent

had acquired more education, 90 per cent were gainfully employed, and 80 per cent were in skilled, technical and managerial positions. The authors note that:

> The development of the woman's personal resources, the support of kith and kin, and the encouragement and support of the husbands all acted as protective buffers that contributed to positive changes in their life trajectories from high risk pregnancy to successful adult adaptation.[24]

Self-esteem and hope

What are, therefore, our concerns about teenage parenting? On a very personal level, we are concerned with outcomes – for the children of these young mothers and for the young mothers themselves. Much of this could be resolved by the provision of good educational programmes that encourage young people to believe that they have a viable future and can achieve their goals. In other words, programmes that enhance their self-esteem and give them hope.

At another level is a basic ambiguity about the very status of adolescence – and the fact that it has changed fairly rapidly over the last decades. There are incongruencies between biological maturity, social maturity, emotional maturity and economic viability – although these are not always clearly defined. In too many instances, adolescents are left to flounder on their own between conflicting messages of the adults around them and the society they are living in, most particularly, the messages that come consciously and subconsciously from the mass media.

And at yet another level are concerns about morals, values, religion. Thus, in most societies there are ambiguities about sexual activity, contraception, abortion, marriage. In both the UK and the USA it is now more common for mothers under 20 to be unmarried rather than married. They are not, therefore, living in accordance with the dominant ideology which demands that children should be born to and reared by a mother and father who are married to one another and live in the same home.

Public rhetoric and private practice

Teenage parenting has complex economic and social roots. It cannot be seen simply as a form of deviant or pathological behaviour on the part of individuals, whether girls or boys. There is sufficient evidence to show that teenage mothers and their children are not all doomed to unsatisfying and poverty-stricken lives, and there exist a variety of programmes that support them in their efforts. But there is no sense, and no justice, in 'blaming the victim' when our societies fail to discuss openly the moral and social ambiguities between public rhetoric and private practice. ❑

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Targetting teenagers

Kenya: hostility and abandonment

Teenage parenthood is no unusual phenomenon in Kenya: in rural areas it is common for women to marry and bear children by the age of 18. What is new, however, is a growing number of unmarried adolescent girls who are mostly to be found in urban and peri-urban areas. In rural areas, there remains a degree of social control with traditional taboos and customs being observed.

A new project in Kenya, run from Kenyatta University, will be looking at two slum areas on the outskirts of Nairobi, the capital. The project will focus on the young and potential parents in order to meet their needs. In addition, the project will identify and learn from child rearing practices and improve living conditions of young children and their caregivers who are not reached by existing services. Although both areas have mixed populations, a significant proportion are adolescent mothers bringing up children on their own. Dr Shashi Bali, the project leader, explains some of the background in this interview.

In Kenyan society, a woman is not viewed as an adult until she has had a child, whatever her age. Not to have a child is the worst thing that can happen to a woman – but the children must be produced within marriage. Kenyans value large families. Several factors account for this preference. One important social cultural factor among the Kikuyu and Wakamba is the naming practice: each relative, starting with the grandparents, expects to have a child named after him or her. But the cash economy is beginning to have an influence. In traditional society, the only cost of a child was to provide food, much of which was grown by the family, whereas now parents are caught by the costs of health care and formal education. In fact, one of the biggest obstacles to school attendance is inability to buy a uniform. Now that parents are having to find hard cash to bring up their children, more of them are questioning the traditional large family.

Now that parents are having to find hard cash to bring up their children, more of them are questioning the traditional large family

Despite the social pressures to have children, unmarried mothers face hostility and, often, abandonment by their families. This is particularly acute when they are still in their teens. In effect, there are two main groups of unmarried teenage mothers: the school dropouts and the prostitutes.

As soon as a girl becomes pregnant she is thrown out of school, she cannot remain because she is considered to be a bad influence. About 10,000 girls have to drop out of school each year because they become pregnant. It is sometimes possible for a girl to go to a different school after she has had the baby, but then she has to hide the fact that she is a mother. Girls at the University do not fare any better. If one becomes pregnant she is allowed to continue her studies but no special allowances are made for her.

We followed up five single students who had had babies and discovered after less than a year that three of the babies had died. The students do not have enough money; usually the father does not want to know; the parents are disgusted with their daughters and, anyway, they are perhaps not capable of helping. So the girl goes to live in a room in the slum area close to the University and she finds the cheapest labour possible to look after her baby – a child of six, seven or possibly 10. She leaves the baby and a bare minimum of food with the child for the whole day while she studies. The child maid does not have enough food herself, how can she be expected to give anything to the baby?

Culturally you cannot talk openly about sex with your parents. However, the extended family structure provided alternative adult guidance in these matters. Grandparents, uncles and aunts helped inculcate social mores. The whole socialisation process culminated in intensive training at the onset of menarche followed by the initiation ceremony. This was seen as acclamation of adult status and the right to marry at approximately the age of 16.

As soon as a girl becomes pregnant she is thrown out of school, she cannot remain because she is considered to be a bad influence

Because of improved health and nutrition, the average age of menarche is earlier now. In Kenya we are trying to eliminate the practice of genital mutilation, but at the same time we are losing the other teaching with it, which is a pity. There were traditional forms of family planning/child spacing. Each group had its own way. For example, when a child could carry a bowl of porridge to the father and not spill it, that was an invitation to the father to come and visit the mother.

Youths are becoming sexually active at a very young age for numerous reasons. One of them being the 'sugar daddy' concept. This is when you want something but you don't have the money and you believe that having a sexual relationship with an older and rich man will help you get the thing you desire.

Abortion is not legal. At great risk to their lives, the girls seek the backstreet abortionists. And many a victim of the operation breathes her last in our national hospital. The girls who carry their babies to term find at birthing that they neither have the knowledge or the traditional support system to take care of the infants. Traditionally, the girls were apprenticed to their mothers and helped look after the younger siblings. Now children are sent to school where they learn 'modern' theories but not about everyday life. ❑

Targetting teenagers in Ireland

The Togher Family Centre in Ireland works with families living on a depressed housing estate in the city of Cork. Many of the people using the Family Centre work with, or are members of single parent families. These two personal accounts are the Family Centre's contribution to the theme of targeting teenagers.

'I really believed that it couldn't happen to me'

I was an immature girl who, because I got pregnant, was meant to behave like a woman. Suddenly I came from being a schoolgirl to being a mother. I wasn't wild, I hadn't even lived – I had hardly been allowed out to discos.

The worst part was being told that I could continue at school when I couldn't face the fingers being pointed. If I had had enough confidence, maybe I could have attended school. You find out who your friends are when you are in trouble, I lost a lot of friends by being pregnant.

I felt that my sex education was inadequate. I believed stupid things. I thought it happened to one in every family, and because it happened to my sister, it couldn't happen to me.

I was made to feel by other people that I was an embarrassment – like people in authority that I had to deal with. I was made to feel grateful for every penny as if it was coming out of their own pockets. The social workers never forced any decisions on me, but they all made me feel that I was a nuisance – when I was applying for my entitlements they didn't make me feel they were my rights.

The family – particularly his – assumed that marriage was the next step. They expected me to get married in church and have a reception. They seemed to be telling me: 'Clean up your act and paint a nice picture of happy families'. I certainly didn't want to be his wife, and just because I was having his child didn't mean that I was in love with him.

We lived together for two years after the baby was born. I felt very jealous and trapped – I needed to be mothered myself and to be loved. No-one asked me what I wanted. Looking back now, I would have liked to have been encouraged to do something to further my education.

I think that all children need a male person in their lives like an uncle, a grandfather. They also need a break from the mother just as much as the mother needs a break. My little girl's dream is to have a father.

I said to my friends that it was an unwanted pregnancy, but after the nine months I wanted the baby. You don't think that it is actually going to be a baby when you are pregnant. I really believed that it couldn't happen to me.

After two years we split up. It was hard but now I've developed as a person. I found support in the Family Centre. By being myself and attending the courses, I have managed to develop. Now I'm independent and working. It hasn't been easy to get where I am today, it has been a very hard struggle, both financially and mentally. I feel the stigma of being on my own with a child is still there – but I'm proud of what I've done.

'The days when girls just disappeared are gone'

Nora teaches Home Economics and Religion – the subjects in which 'family life education' have traditionally been taught in Ireland. There are two courses that schoolgirls can take. One option in the Junior Certificate course for the 12 to 15 age group has been in existence for four years. It deals with child care and is very practical in approach, covering areas such as immunisations and nutritional needs of children.

The other course is in the Social and Scientific course at Leaving Certificate level which students take at age 17 or 18. This is an optional course and focuses on the biological facts of conception, various types of family structure, and the emotional impact of parenting.

Nora finds that conveying the realities of parenting to students can be very hard: 'They love babies and can see no disadvantage in having a child.'

Although, strictly speaking, no student should be able to pass through secondary education without being informed on sexuality and contraception, students can slip through the net if the information is not meaningfully conveyed. A lot can depend on the teacher and his or her attitudes to the subject: 'It fascinates me, the amount of wrong information that sexually active young women still have. Even when teenagers are aware of the need to use contraceptives, and where they are available, they do not always use them.'

In the school where Nora works, there is no set policy concerning teenage mothers. Each case is treated individually with a plan being made with the student, the class teacher, the guidance teacher, the school principal and the parents as to how best the student can continue her education: 'The days when girls just disappeared are gone'.

Nora feels that both attitudes towards teenage mothers and the attitudes of teenage mothers themselves have changed in the last 10 years. There no longer seems to be a need for secrecy and there is an almost universal assumption that they will keep the baby and continue to live at home – teenage motherhood is seen as a way of life.

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Targetting teenagers:

Chile: the stigma of illegitimacy

Since 1992 the *Vicaria de la Pastoral Social* (the Catholic Church's ministry of social care) in Santiago, the capital of Chile, has been running a project working with vulnerable teenage parents. In this article, the project staff explain the background and activities of the project.

Teenage parenthood is a social phenomenon that should be considered as an indicator of quality of life. Like all social phenomena, it is a trend that raises questions and in this article, we attempt to present and analyse some of these questions. Given the complexity of the issue, we are not pretending to answer them.

Birth to women under 20 represent nearly 14 per cent of total births in Chile. But in the poorest areas, the percentage is higher. For example, in 1990 nearly 17 per cent of births in Renca, a poor district of Santiago, were to women under 20, while the rate in the high-income district of Vitacura was less than two per cent. The children of these mothers have a lower chance of survival: in 1985, the infant mortality rate of children born to teenage mothers, at 30 per 1,000 live births, was half as high again as the national average of 20.5 per 1,000.

A few years ago, concerns about teenage pregnancies focused on the biomedical risks for the child-mother and baby. Today it is the psychological and social risks – and their effects on the mother's and child's health – that cause the greatest worries.

We can see that early parenthood often curtails the development of the adolescent father and mother, as well as their child. For example, nearly 45 per cent of adolescent mothers have only between seven and nine years of schooling, and most face motherhood alone. Many are socially stigmatised and feel they have no one to turn to for help or friendship. Most of these women come from poor backgrounds and their status as teenage mothers increases the risk of poverty being transferred to the next generation.

The impact on the children

The number of children born out of wedlock to teenage mothers in Chile has jumped in recent decades, from 29 per cent of live births in 1960 to 61 per cent in 1990. Illegitimacy in Chile carries heavy penalties, including legal and social discrimination. One study revealed that 45 per cent of teenage mothers, at the time of birth, were living alone.

Children of teenage mothers have a higher chance of death in the first year of life; they are often slightly smaller than other children, are more likely to have minor infections and accidents and to be malnourished. In common with all children born to low-income parents, they are slow to develop language skills.

The relationship between teenage mother and child is fraught with emotional difficulties. The adolescent mother tends to find it difficult to build an affectionate bond with her child. She often feels ambivalent towards her or him, and this factor raises the probability of delays in the childs physical and emotional development.

The children tend to be very dependent on their mothers they are timid, quiet and reluctant to explore the world alone. This dependency gives rise to contradictory feelings of love and rejection in the mother, who feels helpless and lacks the necessary emotional strength herself. As a result, mother and child find it difficult to express affection, and the mother tends to copy her own parents model of upbringing.

Cristina's story

'Being a single mother is not easy,' says 19-year-old Cristina, who lives in La Pintana, Santiago with her daughter Natalia, who is nearly two years old.

La Pintana is a community of 163,000 people on the southern boundary of the Chilean capital where one-fifth of the population lives in extreme poverty. Some 15 per cent of all births in 1991 were to adolescent girls. There are 1,431 single mothers under 20, most with just one child but some with two or even three.

One of the biggest difficulties Cristina has encountered is rejection by the community: 'They look badly upon you, they discriminate against you ... you walk down the street and the women say: "there goes that pot-bellied tramp again!"'

Cristina also feels that adults don't understand how teenage mothers feel. Referring to herself and other teenage mothers, she says: 'We wanted to have a child, either because we felt lonely or just wanted to have a family. Adults don't understand our motives or our situation, they say that they got married to have children'.

The children, meanwhile, are given few opportunities to build self-esteem: 'Our children grow up with traumas because at school they're called bastards'. Cristina feels that her daughter is very quiet. 'Our children are either more aggressive or very timid, they're reserved, they keep things to themselves. When they're at school they feel different because when there are school events the other children go with their fathers'.

Besides being social outcasts, the mothers are often also misunderstood by their families, as Cristina describes: 'Mummy doesn't listen to me, she's not my friend, she reproaches me for having had a child. I live with my stepfather and he is not nice to my daughter. It makes me feel bad, I don't know what to do, it makes me want to leave, but where to? I sometimes think things would be no better elsewhere'.

Another big problem is going out to work: 'Working means you have to leave your children alone. You are not there to look after them and they end up on the street. Since they feel lonely, its easy as they get older to get involved with drugs and drink'.

Through the programme, young mothers have opportunities to share experiences and learn from one another

The missing father figure

Among poor communities in particular, the father figure represents authority. The absence of such a figure deprives the child of a role model while the mother's lack of a partner tends to mar her emotional development and stability which indirectly affects her child. Against this background, it is often the mother's family that establishes the social norms while the existence of the biological father is often ignored or played down.

Within the mother's family, with no father figure to establish authority, the child is often confused about what he can and cannot do, making him more susceptible to rebuke and rejection. The maternal grandmother usually represents stability for the child. If she is also the economic provider, she can have a strong influence on the child to the extent that her image replaces paternal authority and competes with the emotional role of the mother.

Teenagers who were already poor will find themselves poorer as a result of motherhood, as it is more difficult for them to receive education and find salaried employment. In addition, the self-esteem of mother and child is frequently undermined by criticism from other community members. For this reason, it is important to work with the community to help mitigate the social stigmatisation, as well as to nurture the collective impulse to help others in need.

There is still much room for research on the way in which a pregnant teenager is perceived, but we can assume that while the community cannot take the place of the family, it can greatly contribute to the development of the mother and child.

The project

The *Vicaria de la Pastoral Social* was set up in the Diocese of Santiago in October 1992 as a church social programme aimed at seeking responses to the challenges of today's society. In this context, teenage parenthood requires priority attention, and we set out to develop a model of communal help in poor communities on the urban fringe. The aim is to involve the community in activities that benefit the overall development of the children and their parents.

The programmes objectives are to strengthen the capacity and optimise the resources of the child, the mother and the father (where applicable) and the community. The specific aim is to improve the overall development of children aged 0 to 7 who are born to adolescent mothers, through educational and recreational services.

The programme hinges on community participation. It works through members of the local community who, after a period of training, strive to promote improvements in the well-being of the target group. The specific activities of the programme are:

- training *monitores* (adult, experienced mothers)
- play groups for younger children
- home visits
- play activities for children aged 3 to 7 years designed to build up social skills and values
- workshops for mothers that deal with child rearing and stimulation, personal development, sexuality and legal rights
- an information service to provide mothers with general background on their legal rights and available social benefits
- training local community members in the management of child care groups and community activities.

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Targetting teenagers

Jamaica: breaking the cycle

Breaking the cycle of the daughters of teenage mothers becoming teenage mothers themselves is possibly the single overall objective of the Teenage Mothers Project (TMP) in Jamaica. Its strategies address those factors that are understood to contribute to teenage pregnancy and which such a programme has the possibility of affecting. Thus it works with teenage mothers and their children, with the grandmothers (and grandfathers if present), and with the fathers of the babies (if possible). It also undertakes preventive work in schools and the community, does research, and advocates for more public awareness and understanding.

Teenage pregnancy – children bearing children – has become an accepted part of the lives of a large number of Jamaican women. In 1989, the last year for which figures are available, there were 13,203 children born to girls aged 19 years and under. Of these, 386 were born to girls of 15 years or younger. Births to girls aged 17 and under comprise some 11 per cent of the national total.

A TMP student – extracts from a case study

H is the youngest of 11 children, her father deserted the family when she was five. She lives with her mother and one brother in a two-room concrete structure on the edge of town. The family lives from her mother's low earnings in a market.

A good student at school, H had had no previous relationship with her baby's father. She said that he had invited her to his room and began petting ... the experience felt good ... being pregnant did not even cross her mind until she missed the second period ... she decided not to tell anyone for she did not want anyone to know ... she did not want to leave school .. she did her exams and was fourth in her class.

Her mother did not find out until the eight-month pregnancy was confirmed by a doctor. She was shocked and ashamed and took H to visit the father whose family agreed to help with the baby's upkeep.

H was taken to TMP by her mother and attended the Centre for three weeks before the birth and returned six weeks after. She said the counselling and parenting education were very helpful and she was able to overcome the fear and shame she felt ... those in the advanced programme were seen as examples of new hope ... the Centre's efforts to involve her mother in the programme has brought back the tight bond between them and much needed support.

The Centre supported H to enter evening school and she is working towards national examinations. She is looking forward to working towards a University degree and intends to pursue a career in engineering.

This article is based on *Teenage Mothers Project – Breaking the Cycle* (1994) Mona, Jamaica TMP/UWI and *Feasibility Study on the Teenage Mothers Project* submitted by Eleanor Wint PhD to the Bernard van Leer Foundation, March 1994

The Teenage Mothers Project began in 1986 and is based in the town of May Pen in central Jamaica, covering rural parishes with a high incidence of teenage births. As a holistic programme, TMP is unique in Jamaica in becoming 'the first setting which effectively treats both mother and child as a total entity'. Its Centre is for girls aged 17 years and below who are pregnant with their first child, are from poor economic circumstances, and have an identifiable support group, preferably within their original families.

Because of the stigma that still attaches to teenage motherhood, pregnancy usually results in exclusion from school, and the refusal by the school to allow a girl back after giving birth. When they have the academic potential, TMP has helped them back into the education system or has enabled them to gain school certificates at evening classes. For the majority, TMP has helped them to enter the world of work by upgrading their literacy and steering them towards practical skills. This has ensured that 93 per cent of the 350 girls who have gone through TMP are either studying or working.

Developing positive feelings

Counselling is the crucial underpinning of the TMP programme in the Centre and in the community. This is undertaken on an individual level, within a group, or with the family. With the individual teenage mother, the focus is on helping her to develop positive feelings about herself. A simple aid that is used is to encourage the young mother to remind herself that: 'No matter what you say or do, I am a worthwhile person'.

In addition to direct support for young mothers and their children, TMP has inspired a programme for men which originated in the programme's efforts to involve the fathers of the babies. Work with males helped project director Joyce Jarrett to analyse the reasons for high rates of unmarried teenage pregnancy and the tendency of men to believe that sperm production is their only role. Reasons go back generations to a slave culture where nothing encouraged men to settle or to enter into permanent relationships. Currently, poor employment prospects, unstable family structures and sheer ignorance contribute to the problem. The men's programme, now reaching more than 50 young men, has a separate committee and is expected to become independent of TMP over the next few years.

The preventive aspect of TMP's work involves the development of a counselling programme in schools (see box above right). This is in the context of 'a national concern [about] deteriorating moral standards and values' identified by a feasibility study conducted to assist TMP to assess its future options. The study stresses the need to support the programme 'as TMP reflects more than simply a local (May Pen) interest, but even more important, a wisdom born of experience which should be used to impact on a national policy aimed at refocusing young girls who represent a potential, viable human resource.' ❑

encouragement and support for breastfeeding is one of the many facets of the Teenage Mothers Project in Jamaica

Working in schools

In 1987 the Teenage Mothers Project initiated a counselling programme for Grade 10 students in five schools in the May Pen area. It had similarities with an existing schools counselling programme but tried to create a warm participatory atmosphere and included human sexuality and contraception – topics often avoided by school counsellors. The programme focused on eight areas: relationships, communication, physical development, emotional development, contraception, career choices, decision making, preparation for family life.

In 1990, two groups of Grade 11 students were asked to complete questionnaires. One had participated in the TMP counselling (the experimental group) and the other group in the regular school counselling programme (the control group).

Responses by the experimental group were very positive, general comments included:

The programme teaches you:

- to better understand yourself and your body
- about family life and relating to others
- to value yourself
- how to cope with peer pressure.

On control group, 71 of the 82 students in the experimental group felt it had been 'taught adequately', compared to 20 out of 84 students in the control group. Responses to questions about attitudes before and after the counselling showed that the TMP programme was more effective in teaching about healthy relationships and that both programmes had some effect in teaching students how to avoid pregnancy. Analysis of all responses led to the conclusion 'that the counselling given to the experimental group resulted in their being better prepared for adulthood in that they demonstrated knowledge critical to the development of more appropriate attitudes towards relationships'.

Overall, more than 1,100 students have been reached by the TMP counselling programme and, although there are obviously other intervening variables, the initial results are highly encouraging. Between 1987 and 1988 the number of pregnancies in schools with the preventive programme was reduced from 19 to just four, while in schools without such a programme, they increased from 17 to 30.

Source: *Evaluation of schools' counselling programme*. Teenage Mothers Project, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. September 1990.

Targetting teenagers

Trinidad: 'it's not easy being a teenager now'

When Servol (Service Volunteered for All) started working with teenagers in Trinidad in 1970, it first thought that what was needed were vocational courses. Soon it realised that the teenagers' attitudes to the world of work needed attention and thus an Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) evolved which precedes the skills training courses. By the mid-1980s, a parenting programme was introduced into the ADP when Servol realised that many of the adolescents missed out on 'normal' family life. Basic hygiene and biology are taught from the start, and the adolescents are taught how their bodies work, basic reproduction, and aspects of child development.

'These kids are streetwise,' said Marilyn Stollmeyer who teaches the parenting programme, 'but they honestly and truly don't know what really goes on inside their bodies.' Using a mixture of visual aids, guest speakers, visits, lectures and discussions, the programme covers conception, birth, breastfeeding, abortion, contraception, rape, alcoholism, drugs and sexually transmitted diseases as well as common myths.

The groups are mixed, and one aim is to show boys that they are responsible in sexual relationships; that the issues under discussion are not matters which concern only women.

'Some of the girls already have one or two babies; the boys don't usually acknowledge their fatherhood,' said Marilyn Stollmeyer 'and we have to handle it carefully so as not to make them feel guilty, but to help them understand what is involved. The talks and visual aids open them up and their questions are based on real life. We can't take them out of their situation; we just have to support them. They are going home to abuse, sexual or otherwise, to rape, incest, alcoholic parents, drugs.

'They go into the creche and work with the children there and we have competitions. We take a six month old and a two year old and the trainees amuse them – the competition is to see who can stimulate the children most. We want them to understand how much responsibility you have with a baby. We try to deter them from teenage births and hope they realise that when the time comes to have children there is so much to look forward to.'

Bernadette John, an ADP coordinator, acknowledged that 'it's not easy being a teenager now; it has got a lot harder. There is a lot of pressure being placed on them; they have too much responsibility on their shoulders; to achieve, to help their families, looking after younger brothers and sisters, having to work at evenings and weekends. They get frustrated because their parents set goals for them that the kids can't accept. And yet we demand a lot from them here; they have to be punctual, neat, tidy, attend regularly. We have to do that because later they will have to face the rat race outside.' ❑

Source: Cohen, Ruth (1991) *Shaping tomorrow: the Servol programmes in Trinidad and Tobago*, Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Netherlands

Targetting teenagers

USA: advocacy in New York City

One in five of all babies born in the USA are children of teenage mothers. In New York City each year, some 20,000 women under 20 give birth to their first child, an additional 3,000 give birth to their second or third child. One of the more alarming facts is that, while the rate of births to 18-19 year olds is decreasing, the number of younger girls giving birth is rising: in 1989, the last year for which figures are available, about 1,200 girls in New York under 15 gave birth.

This article is based on unpublished documents from and about the Teen Parenting Project and, except where otherwise noted, the quotations are taken from *Ethnographic Observations of the Teen Parent Resource Centre*, Nancy Barnes Ph D., Lang College, New School for Social Research, August 1992

The major underlying cause of teenage childbearing is poverty. Many of the factors that are believed to lead to early sexual experience and pregnancy are characteristics associated with poverty: low quality or low levels of education, a negative perception of the future, limited employment opportunities, fatherless families and feelings of alienation. The young women who give birth in New York are much more likely than other teenagers to come from families that are economically and socially disadvantaged: 83 per cent of those giving birth are from such families.

Despite such findings, services for teenage parents and their children living in New York are scattered among numerous agencies, are uncoordinated and difficult to access, and do not necessarily meet the needs. This has led Community Studies Inc, a group of educational innovators, to initiate a Teen Parenting Project that is focusing on advocacy and on the needs of the youngest teenage parents and their children.

The major underlying cause of teenage childbearing is poverty

Community Studies Inc has worked in high schools since 1985 to ensure good quality child care for the children of teenage parents that also allows the teenagers to complete their education. At the same time, it has developed an 'Inquiry Curriculum' that provides a model of teacher-student interaction, recognising the adult status of teenage parents and equipping them with critical thinking skills.

Teen Parent Resource Centre

From these experiences, the Teen Parent Resource Centre (TPRC) opened in 1990. It trains staff of public schools, family centres and other people working with teenage parents and their children. It also conducts workshops, advice sessions, convenes a Teen Parent Council, and publishes a regular newsletter.

A major achievement of the TPRC has been to convene a city-wide Task Force on Pregnant and Parenting Teens which brings together representatives of the major public and private agencies working with this group. Since mid-1994, the Task Force is located in the Office of the City Comptroller although it is an independent entity.

An ethnographic study conducted in 1991-92 by Dr Nancy Barnes drew attention to the 'dense maze of city bureaucracies and private agencies with their endlessly overlapping yet always partial responsibilities for pregnant and parenting teens and their children'. Research for the Task Force has led to an estimate of over 100,000 days of school missed by teenagers while they are seeking access to services for themselves and their children. A professional worker in a public agency expressed it thus:

> Kids don't segregate their lives this way, they really don't. **We** do it and we make it very complicated for them because they're in and out of so many different programs, trying to deal with just one problem or one issue ... That's the way **we** organise services and we simply don't take the time to work together. That's a real mistake.

Conflicts about whether children and adolescents should receive sex education and information about contraception, let alone condoms, are rife in the USA. This was illustrated in May 1992, when the New York Board of Education put so many restrictions on an instruction manual accompanying condoms distributed in high schools that all educational materials on AIDS used in the city's schools were under threat. Restrictions included the injunction that 'no written or oral instruction shall ever portray abstinence and "protected sex" as equally "okay"'. A former Board member was quoted as saying that 'Abstinence is the only surefire way to save our children's lives'.*

Adolescents, however, see it somewhat differently with comments such as: 'they're putting their morals before the facts' and 'it's silly to tell teenagers not to have sex; instead we need to know how to protect ourselves'. Barnes sees such conflicts informing and influencing efforts being made on behalf of pregnant and parenting adolescents, and intensifying the sense of threat and urgency that is felt those who work with and for them.

For too many girls aged between 12 and 15, the morality argument has come too late. The numbers in this age group giving birth led to the opening in 1993 of a school specifically for these very young mothers. It is seen that their educational, child care, health and emotional needs are different to those of older teenage mothers and that they need to be parented themselves, in ways far beyond the capacity of any school to provide.

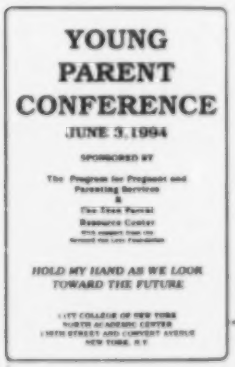
* 'On Deaf Ears' in *New York Newsday*, 28 May 1992

The Teen Parenting Project is conducting ethnographic studies of these young parents and their children and is also developing a Mentoring *Programme*. The idea is to pair older teenage mothers with younger ones so that the older ones can act as 'big sisters'. Training for the mentors will incorporate their own ideas and views, and the hope is that this will result in a flexible curriculum that is built on experience and altered through practice.

There are a number of objectives for the Mentoring Programme. For the younger mothers, these are to encourage them to continue with their education, to support them in their parenting, and to delay future pregnancies. But it is expected that the major impact may well be on the 'big sisters'. Project planners believe that one of the single most powerful ways to foster thoughtful behaviour by older teen parents is to provide a context in which they can reflect on, and critically confront, many of their own assumptions about childrearing. Similarly, many of the planned activities – trips, discussions, workshops – will be of benefit to both younger and older mothers.

'it's silly to tell teenagers not to have sex; instead we need to know how to protect ourselves'

below: the invitation for the 1994 Young Parent Conference 'Hold my hand as we look toward the future'



Adolescents as their own advocates

The Resource Centre has, since 1991, co-sponsored an annual Young Parent Conference (see box below). These conferences, together with regular meetings of the Teen Parent Council, the newsletter and other activities aimed directly at the adolescents, are seen as an essential part of the work to counter public prejudice about teenage parenting. They also help the adolescents in learning to speak out and function as advocates for themselves and their children.

A member of TPRC's Advisory Board believes that for such programmes:

> The most far-reaching goal is that even with the pregnancy, with the baby, the young woman is able to realize her own position in life, have her objectives and feel that she is able to achieve them. **Everything** else – daycare, good academics, family supports – everything has to contribute to that.

The ethnographic study found that among the many differing organisational, personal and political perspectives of the people working with adolescents, they shared a number of convictions, three of which go to the heart of their work.

- First, that teen parents simply must be helped to take good care of their children – which has implications for the institutions that must provide the needed services.
- Second, that adolescents, especially girls, deserve to feel self-respect, to receive encouragement and a sense of high expectations from adults who care about them: 'The sense of future goals and possibilities, so important in itself, also appears to be among the most effective means of delaying parenthood or postponing a young person's having a second baby'.
- Third, high quality education is essential: over half of the teenagers who become pregnant in New York each year have dropped out of high school **before** they become pregnant, in some areas, the proportion is as high as three out of every four. ❑

Young Parent Conference – May 1992

This is a full day of presentations and workshops on topics from 'Starting Your Own Business', to 'Games to Play with Toddlers on Rainy Days'.

A number of the workshops are quite highly orchestrated. For instance, in one that describes a programme in which older teen parents work with ninth graders to encourage them to delay pregnancy until they graduate, the presenters (teen parents) are asked to respond to: 'What would you say about whether having a baby is good for your relationship?' The teens in the audience get very involved and excited about how they can share the knowledge they have as parents with younger kids in their schools and communities.

Another cluster of workshops is interesting because they are conducted entirely by peer educators, who use role play and other theatre techniques to get everyone in the room actively involved. For example, one session called 'He said, she said' begins with a focus on arguing in relationships, especially when you are responsible for a child. On one level, the point of the session is to teach communication skills. Before it is entirely apparent what is happening, the role play shifts to a guy chosen from the audience who is criticising his partner because he doesn't want her to go out on the street dressed as she (really) is, in skin-tight orange jean shorts. The leaders pick up on the young man's possessiveness and jealousy to make connections between the capacity to communicate feelings, the avoidance of violence, and the creation of an environment that will be good for children to grow up in.

Similarly, the role play about whether or not a young couple will use a condom leads into an incredibly wide-ranging discussion on methods of safer sex, HIV transmissions, and contraception. The ease with which sensitive topics are considered, the detailed information available, and the extent to which the adolescent leaders manage to convey that all of this is also about pleasure, for females as well as males, is astonishing to the ethnographer.

Source: *Ethnographic Observations of the Teen Parent Resource Centre*, Nancy Barnes Ph.D., Lang College, New School for Social Research, August 1992 (unpublished)

Network news

Australia/New Zealand networking

Representatives of Foundation-supported projects from Australia and New Zealand met in Alice Springs in April to decide on ways of increasing communications. Two novel outcomes are telephone conferences between projects six times a year; and the circulation of a newsletter in the form of a computer diskette.

Hunter Caravan Project, Australia: ever popular parachute play

Belgium: empowering parents

In October, the Flemish Training and Resource Centre, supported by *Kind en Gezin*, the European Commission, The University of Ghent and the Foundation, organised the fifth annual ENSAC (Europe Network for School Age Children) Conference. The subject was 'Empowering the Parents' and there were 150 participants, including many from projects supported by the Foundation in Europe. The tone was set by a presentation by Professor Koen Raes entitled 'Parenthood and responsible citizenship' which placed early childhood developments in the broad perspective of democracy and responsibility. Workshops included 'Expectations of parents'; 'Out of school care as a bridge between home and school'; 'Co-management by parents'; and 'Parents and children with special needs'.

Colombia: award for FESCO

In September, *Fundación para la Estimulación Adecuada del Niño con Protección Comunitaria* (FESCO – Foundation for child development with community support) received a prize of US$1,000 for its rural work in Colombia from *la Caja de Compensación Familiar* (the Compensatory Fund for Families). The award, which partly celebrates the International Year of the Family, was for FESCO's *Proyecto Rural Familia y Niñez* (Rural Family and Childhood Project). It recognised FESCO's highly effective, innovatory and appropriate work with rural families; as well as the carefully devised and high quality methodology and structure which allows development into other rural areas. The judges were also impressed by the integrated approach to developing and supporting community resources; and – interesting for all those involved in communications – by the simplicity and sincerity with which FESCO told them about its experiences.

Cyprus: partnership for better parenthood

Arab Resource Collective (ARC) organised a regional workshop for participants from projects and agencies from the Maghreb countries in Cyprus in December 1994. It was called 'Partnership for Better Parenthood' and was a follow-up to a 1992 event which identified four challenges and initiatives: policy; resources; community awareness and participation; and human resource development. The new workshop considered ways of developing community awareness and partnership while keeping in mind holistic early childhood development. Additional objectives included extending the regional network to include more practitioners and policy makers; and encouraging partnership between those involved in the field of ECD.

France: family bonds and imprisonment

A two-day conference in Paris in November was attended by 400 participants from several European countries. Organised by *Relais Enfants Parents* (REP) and funded by the European Union and the Foundation, it was aimed at members of the judiciary, lawyers, prison social workers and representatives of interested organisations. The conference, titled *Liens Familiaux et Détention* (Family bonds and imprisonment), presented experiences from France, Belgium, England, The Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain. A subsequent meeting the next day followed up previous workshops in Brussels, Marseille and Rheims, and established a steering committee which will work towards the building of a Europe-wide network on issues concerning the children of imprisoned parents.

Guatemala: inter-regional workshop

Sociedad para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia Guatemalteca (SODIFAG – Society for the integrated development of the Guatemalan family) organised a regional workshop on the subject of 'Childcare and Education Programmes' in conjunction with the Foundation. Held in September, it was attended by 25 participants from Foundation-supported projects in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia and Venezuela. Topics covered included: the situation of the child in Guatemala; alternative methodologies in pre-school and childcare programmes; involving parents and the wider community; influencing national policy; and securing and sustaining structural funding. One outcome is the formation of a committee to look at ways of influencing policy. It will collect information for an overview of experience which will also serve as the agenda for a follow-up conference to be held next year. The workshop was followed by two days of field visits.

Italy: project achievements with Po Delta children

The Municipality of Comacchio, which participated in the Foundation-supported *Progetto Infanzia per il Delta del Po* (Po Delta Childhood Project) operated by the University of Bologna, hosted a seminar in December to examine the project's achievements. Evaluations and presentations were made by project staff, by regional representatives and by researchers from two other universities. Local organisations that had participated in the project used the occasion for further advocacy of ECD work; while a publication about the project was also presented and launched.

Malaysia: training indigenous trainers

Partners of Community Organisations (PACOS) – an organisation that works with disadvantaged and marginalised indigenous communities – held a week long workshop in September to train trainers from organisations that serve rural indigenous squatter and plantation communities in Sarawak, Sabah and Peninsula Malaysia. A total of 16 trainers from 10 organisations participated in order to develop their own knowledge bases and skills as trainers. The workshop followed on from a training of trainers event in June 1994; and the trainers who benefitted from that acted as a resource for this one. In the same way, the trainers from Sarawak, Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia will in turn train other trainers on their return to their communities.

Mozambique: study tour to Portugal

The Foundation sponsored, together with the Frederick Ebert Foundation, a three week study visit to Portugal in November by six Mozambican specialists from the State Secretariat of Social Action. The visit was coordinated by the *Instituto da Comunidades Educativas* (ICE – Institute of Educational Communities) in Portugal which organised a programme drawn from the Mozambican delegation's needs. The programme had three elements: visits to different examples of ICE's work; reflections about realities in Portugal and Mozambique; and a systematic exploration of the practical realities and problems of working with children, communities, teachers and managers.

The Netherlands: new playleaders' manual

The Foundation-supported *Samenspel* project launched a new practical manual in December. In Dutch and with an accompanying video, it is called *Praktijkboek Samenspel* (*Samenspel's* Activity Book), and is designed to help playleaders enhance the role of mothers in play with their children. To do this, it covers a wide range of activities, starting from basics such as developing the necessary self confidence in mothers; and continuing through to enabling them to work out their own activities at home with their children. To make it practical, it is divided into sections and is loose bound so that sections can be taken out for easier use. It is extensively illustrated and also includes many ideas for play. More information is available from Stichting De Meeuw, PO Box 57689, 3008 BR Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Portugal: RADIAL shows what can be done

An exhibition of work carried out under the European Union's Leader programme was held in Santerém, Portugal, in October. The Leader programme supports rural initiatives to counter population drift towards the cities. The Foundation-supported RADIAL project, as a beneficiary of the Leader programme, exhibited one of its three highly decorated minibuses. This bus normally operates around the rural Mertola area of southern Portugal, carrying educational books and toys for pre-school and primary school children. A second one covers the Alcoutim district while a third will start work in January 1995 in the Almodovar district.

Peru, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia and Argentina: expanding communications

A number of recent initiatives are benefitting Foundation-supported projects in the more southern parts of the Americas through dissemination and exchanges of experiences, information and ideas.

These include discussions about cost-benefit analysis with three projects: MINIDUC (Ministry of Education, Peru), Teenage Parenting (*Vicaria de la Pastoral Social*, Chile) and Early Stimulation and Education in Disadvantaged Communities (*Pastoral da Criança*, Brazil). The results are helping the planning of the evaluation of both the *Yachay* and REDUC (Chile) projects. In Brazil two situation analyses, one on black girls, the other on public ECD services are under way; while in Argentina, the *Yachay* project is designing its overall evaluation with the support of two independent consultants from Peru and Bolivia.

Several workshops and conferences have also been organised or hosted by Foundation-supported projects. These include: AMMEPE's five-day workshop on ECD policies in Minas Gerais state (Brazil); *Pastoral da Criança's* four day regional conference on ECD in the Northeast of Brazil; and a five day workshop on planning and managing held by the Non-formal Education Project (Peru).

Meanwhile, the Non-formal Education Project is also expanding its own communications activity by producing a new publication – *Creciendo hasta 6* (Growing to six years) – every two months; and a series of Working Papers. It has also set up an electronic mail facility ('e mail') and this has the identification postmaster@gobvnl.pe.

Congratulations to Oscar van Leer on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

Oscar van Leer, the son of Bernard van Leer, was the first Chairman of the Foundation's Board. In this position, he was instrumental in shaping the Foundation as it is today and, in particular, in deciding that its main focus should be on young children.

In honour of his birthday, on 15 November, the Foundation has instituted an *Oscar van Leer Award* which will be given annually to a project for excellence in enabling parents and communities to help young children realise their innate potential.

An article about the recipients of the first award will appear in the next *Newsletter*.

UK: not imposing inadequacy on parents

Young Families Now organised a one-day parent support seminar in October in Aberdeen, Scotland for organisations from the Grampian region. The day was intended to raise awareness of the differing methods of empowering parents by demonstrating local examples of good practice. However, a central aim was to consider how to avoid models of work with parents that make them feel inadequate. Workshops included: 'How crèches can serve family agendas'; 'Whose room is it?'; 'Positive learning outcomes for parents and children'; and 'Parental support: a holistic approach'.

USA: meeting the needs of young children

The Directors of Foundation-supported projects in the USA held a three-day workshop on the Carnegie Foundation's report *Starting points*: meeting the needs of young children at the end of September. Kathryn Young from the Carnegie Foundation acted as a resource person for the workshop. The report is the fruit of three years' work by the Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children and sets out to provide a framework of scientific knowledge and offer an action agenda to ensure the healthy development of children from before birth to three years. It was published in April 1994, and starts by stating that (in the USA) 'the crucially formative years of early childhood have become a time of peril and loss for millions of children and their families' before moving on to indicate how much of this damage can now be prevented. The report is available from Carnegie Corporation of New York, PO Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604, USA. ❑

Servol receives 1994 Right Livelihood award

Servol (Service Volunteered for All) from Trinidad, has received the 1994 Right Livelihood Award, in conjunction with Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Nigeria); and Dr H Sudarshan and *Vivekananda Girijana Karyana Kendra* (India). The US$250,000 award is shared by the three organisations.

In making the Award, the Right Livelihood Foundation jury selected Servol 'for showing the crucial importance of spiritual values, cooperation and family responsibility, in addition to practical skills and achievements, in building a civilised society'.

The Right Livelihood Awards were introduced in 1980 to honour and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing the world today. Often referred to as alternative Nobel Prizes, they were endowed by the Swedish-German philatelist Jakob von Uexkull who believed that Nobel Prizes ignore much work and knowledge that is vital for the survival of humanity.

Servol and its many innovations and initiatives have often been featured in the *Newsletter* over the 24 years that the Foundation has supported its work; and it has also been the subject of a number of books. These include *Shaping Tomorrow* by Ruth N Cohen, published by the Foundation in 1991, and available from the Foundation free of charge for single copies. UNESCO has just published *On the right track*, by Cynthia Guttman, in their 'Making It Work' series, which is available from 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France.

Two other titles of special interest are: *A mole cricket called Servol*, and *The Servol Village* both by Gerard Pantin - Servol's founder, former director and now its Chairman. These books are available only from: Community Education Development Centre, Lyng Hall, Blackberry Lane, Coventry CV2 3JS, England; price £2.50p plus £0.50p per £5 value of order p&p, plus £1.00 per order overseas.

Father Gerard Pantin, Chairman, and Sister Ruth Montrichard, Executive Director, with the award in the Swedish Parliament building, Stockholm

Report from the field

Okinawa *Bunko*: children in the Other Japan

Merry White

Dr White is Professor of Sociology at Harvard University, and Associate in Research at the Edwin O Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies. She is a former Director of the Foundation's Project on Human Potential, a cross-cultural study of learning, based at Harvard University.

The Foundation currently supports the *Bunko* movement on the remote island of Okinawa, Japan. It is a grassroots organisation which provides a variety of strategies and activities centred around making books accessible to children and their families.

Bunko are small 'home libraries' using books to stimulate young children's interest in learning and the world around them. Parents of pre-school and elementary school children are an important part of the *Bunko* equation and encouraged to bring their children and to learn together the joy of reading, music, art and play – the whole child is engaged, as are the parents in the creative and communal exercise. The books come from several sources, including a support organisation of parents and voluntary groups called the Okinawa Association, publishers, municipal or regional funds and UNESCO.

Okinawa only reverted from American control in 1976; and its culture is relatively diverse for Japan, with influences from Malaya, the Philippines, other Southeast Asia cultures and the South Pacific Islands. However, mainland Japanese culture, politics and bureaucracies govern most aspects of people's lives – especially in the urban areas – in what might be seen as a colonial relationship.

Okinawa reflects disadvantage and distance. Economic conditions are especially poor and there are high rates of unemployment, divorce, lone parent families and infant mortality. Birth weights are low and there is also a low rate of high school completion – something which affects accreditation and therefore future employment prospects.

These conditions contrast starkly with mainland Japan. On the other hand, Okinawa possesses a good infrastructure, communication and distribution system and, in other areas, appears advanced. The cost of living, however, is high.

plenty of enthusiasm from these eager Bunko *users*

The economic base is sugar cane, pineapples and tourism. However, in recent recessionary years tourists have chosen to go to Southeast Asia or Taiwan where holidays are cheaper. In short, being part of the Japanese economy has not been of uniform benefit to Okinawa.

Similarly, access to Japanese schooling for Okinawan children has been a mixed blessing: the Ministry of Education ensures equal distribution of resources to all schools, and of well trained teachers. But parents have to provide such support systems as after school cramming classes or home tutors to ensure opportunity and security for their children. However, they often cannot afford these, and so their children's access to the ladder of success through academic credentials is limited.

Appropriate diversity

In Okinawa, the *Bunko* have developed differently from those of the mainland where this movement was started. Although they reflect the movement's usual aims, they also encourage and reflect the special interests, culture and needs of the region.

The needs of local communities and the interests, resources and tastes of *Bunko* managers have an influence. This means that, although all *Bunko* provide a place where children can meet to relax, browse through books, be read to, and socialise with other children, diversity is built in. There are at least three types of *Bunko*: those housed in community centres; those located in private homes; and those in their own quarters.

Some *Bunko* specialise in books about local culture or legends, some in nature and one in large picture books by well known artists. But, whatever the specialisation, when children hear that new books have arrived, they rush to check them out and hear new stories.

Operations, activities and benefits

Many of the staff are mothers – dedicated volunteers who are well prepared to encourage and support children. *Bunko* train them, building on the skills they already have as household managers and mothers, and moving them closer to being professional leaders and teachers. However, they are likely to have full time jobs outside the home as well and this limits the time they can spend in *Bunko* management. It seems likely that their efforts will soon be supplemented by those of retired older community members whose numbers are increasing.

As a bonus, women of all ages find that *Bunko* work provides them with spaces in which they can meet with an informal support group not unlike the traditional village *idobata kaigi* or 'well-side gossip group' – a community of women who support each other and exchange helpful information.

Further support to women is more direct. Given the high incidence of working single mothers, some Okinawan *Bunko* have added after-school hours. This both provides a service, and counteracts children's isolation.

Bunko offer a range of play activities, and some exercises in reading readiness for the younger children too, although cognitive development is not stressed. All offer *kami shibai* (a small paper theatre with slide cards showing scenes in a narrated playlet), and other participatory activities; while some also provide artistic materials and display children's artwork. Other activities include regular

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expeditions, field trips and picnics; and work with local community leaders to participate in festivals of folk dances or songs. In one *Bunko* I visited, children were preparing *mochi* (rice paste sweets steamed in banana leaves) and were creating a comic play to perform at the local summer festival.

Necessity, variety and change

Bunko are particularly useful in bringing children of different ages together. The birthrate in Japan is declining sharply and now stands at 1.46 children per family. While it is a little higher in Okinawa, parents say that their children lack the emotional support and opportunities for developing social skills that occur naturally in a family with several children. *Bunko* help to fill this gap, while older children get a chance to take responsibility for younger ones. In one *Bunko*, a child of about five was watching a toddler and noticed that he dropped a marker into a box of musical instruments. Without adult intervention, he helped the toddler retrieve the marker and replace it in its correct spot.

There are also children of different socio-economic backgrounds and some children of mixed racial heritage. Some *Bunko* use local Okinawan dialect in songs and traditional folk tales. But, since schools rarely encourage this, it is probably not maintained except as a relic of ethnic tradition.

Okinawans say that children are not made by parents, or by environmental influences, but are *sazukarimono* – gifts of the gods. In this tradition, adults are seen as nurturers rather than trainers. This gives rise to a feeling that mainland ideas put too much pressure on parents, and especially mothers. So far, Okinawan parents have remained relatively relaxed about their children's progress. However, this may be changing.

Particular yet universally valuable?

The importance of the Okinawan *Bunko* lies in their resistance to the cognitive emphasis which is trickling down into early childhood programmes. In contrast, *Bunko* offer a 'whole child' focus which is appealing to parents who regret the inroads that have been made into childhood freedom and exploration.

Bunko also support families, encouraging them to use the library facilities together, and so help to create a wider family unit for those in smaller and less cohesive families. In addition, the bonus of support to the elderly and to the local community is considerable; while the *Bunko* also boost local culture, encouraging children to take pride in their traditions as a counter to the 'metropolitanising effect of the national education system'.

In general, the common goals and methods of the Okinawan *Bunko* programmes may have applicability beyond the Ryukyu Island area, even beyond Japan itself. With suitable development, Okinawan *Bunko* provide a model to export, making Okinawa more than just a passive receptor of mainland programmes. ❑

Report from the field

Israel: applying Intermediary Learning

Tikva Evron

Tikva Evron is Project Director of the Foundation-supported Kiryat Gat ECD programme, which operates from the Early Childhood Centre in the town of Kiryat Gat in Israel. Here she describes how the programme bases its work around the concept of a holistic approach to child development, and around the theory of 'intermediary learning' in which children learn how to learn through direct experiences which are guided and developed by adults.

She illustrates the theory by taking a typical topic and demonstrating how learning possibilities are developed from it.

Today, there is a great emphasis on the influence of young children's environments on their development and, as key elements in those environments, on the people who largely establish them. These people – who are most often their parents, members of their families or the adults who look after them – can enable children to encounter developmentally important experiences and can help them make the best use of them.

Because of this, one of the most important activities of the Early Childhood Centre is to provide training for such adults. The programme was planned with, and is now supported by, the Ministry of Education.

The training is based on developing social and educational programmes for young children and their parents; and on improving the skills of professional and para-professional staff who work with very young children.

The basic assumption that underlies our work is that the more 'educators' know about children and their individual development characteristics, the better they will be equipped to answer children's varying needs – for example, by developing new and existing skills in children.

We have now developed a model which is used for planning and operating activities for children. It consists of the following five components.

- The areas of development – eg: emotional, social, cognitive, language, motor, and developmental sequences.
- The temperament of the children – eg: activity level, persistence, approach/withdrawal, how easily distracted, moods, reactions, biological rhythms, adaptability, and sensitivity.
- The ways of learning – eg: imitation, experimentation and making mistakes, and mediation.
- Children's environments – eg: parents, educational framework, society.
- The educational sequence – eg: using appropriate stimuli, children's previous responses to stimuli, and the level of complexity of the stimulation.

New activities for the educators to use with children are worked out every two weeks and relate to such things as the seasons, festivals, and the development level of children of different ages. They aim to nurture curiosity, inquisitiveness and love of

Characteristics of balls

Moves and stops, bounces, can be thrown and caught, comes closer and goes away, rolls, can be balanced, can be controlled, calls for control of the body.

Different sorts of balls: football, basket ball, table tennis ball.

Concepts

colour; texture;
spatial concepts (up, down, inside, outside, close, far);
quantity (more, less);
speed (fast, slow);
power (strong, weak);
size (big, small);
weight (light, heavy).

Children's development and activities with the ball

Babies learn about the ball with their senses through checking and researching what can be done with it. Later (about age three) they are able to join in with social ball games.

Contribution to development of:

Gross and fine motor skills, intellectual ability, labelling, emotional and social skills.

Learning with balls: a sample topic for work with children

This example shows how a sample topic is analysed for use with children, and how that analysis leads into planning activities.

Materials needed

Balls of various types, textures, etc.

Balls in different sizes and colours.

Matching games by colour and by size.

Picture of an activity with ball for teaching spatial concepts.

Sample activities

teaching concepts
a solo game/encouragement to join a social game
body control and controlling the ball

Controlled behaviour

Teaching children to direct and control their movements.

Sample reciprocity

Finding time for each individual child.

Samples of significance

Naming: teaching relevant concepts; naming and so enriching the vocabulary.

Encouraging/enabling: expressing enthusiasm for the game, pointing out the movements of the ball; admiration of the child controlling the ball.

Explaining: colours, sizes, power, quantity, height.

Comparing: the ball with other objects, eg. wheels, cubes.

Sample purposes

To transfer to the child a feeling that a social game is pleasure and fun; using the social game for teaching a group.

Emotional Capabilities Intermediaries

Choosing: the right activity for children, not too difficult, activity with a challenge within and not too simple.

Organising: so that children will succeed, will know it and will know why.

investigation in children, and so stimulate learning and thus development.

The educators are trained by professionals and concentrate on the character of the activities, on methods and ideas for using them with children, and on their contribution to child development. In addition, the educators are offered materials, guidance in preparing aids, and access to a wide range of early childhood books and periodicals.

Intermediary Learning

To enable them to carry out their work with children, the centre trains adults in the techniques of 'Intermediary Learning'.

Intermediary learning is defined by Professor Reuven Feuerstein as being within the theoretical framework of 'cognitive modifiability'. This can be described as the ability of an organism to change itself to utilise learned principles, abilities and behavioural patterns in order to adapt to new situations. Individuals are therefore seen as open operators whose functioning depends upon specific experiences during their developmental period.

For educators, this leads to an emphasis on making use of previous experiences; and a focus on the ability of the individual to learn how to learn. It means concentrating on children's interactions with their environments; and ensuring that adults act as mediators between the children and the stimuli that are in their environments. The point is to teach children to become better learners by helping them in such areas as reacting to stimuli clearly and accurately; establishing sequences; connecting incidents; retaining experiences; and anticipating and planning.

Report from the field

Launching the *Intelyape-Iyape Akaltye* project

Deborah Hartman

'We, the Arrernte people of Central Australia, want to develop our own curriculum for our school... Aboriginal people want to keep their culture alive and their language strong. To do this we want our children to have their own teachers in our own communities.'

These words, by Imelda Palmer, an Aboriginal teacher from *Lyenlye Apurte* community, addressing a conference in 1991, capture the sentiments that started the long journey of the *Intelyape-Iyape Akaltye* Project to develop appropriate curricula and materials for Arrernte students.

But why *Intelyape-Iyape*? The name was suggested by Agnes Palmer, an *Arrernte* teacher, to reflect the intentions of the people in this area. *Intelyape-Iyape* means butterfly and *akaltye* means learning. 'Butterfly' is important because butterflies are very common in all three of the 'caterpillar dreamings' (beings or places of spiritual significance) in the area where the curriculum will be used. Thus *Intelyape-Iyape* is a strong metaphor for cooperation between communities and their schools. It also symbolises the changes that the children will go through in learning Arrernte ways: they will grow and develop to reach their full potential through the curricula.

This article was prepared by the Coordinator of the Foundation-supported *Intelyape-Iyape Akaltye* Project together with the other staff members. The project operates under the auspices of the Yipirinya School, an independent Aboriginal organisation. In cooperation with Arrernte communities it is developing culturally appropriate curricula and materials for work with Arrernte children in Central Australia.

The article offers insights into some of the many complexities of devising, starting up and operating a project, and concentrates on issues, processes, problems and solutions that typically have to be dealt with. However, it is not intended as a 'how to do it' guide for those who are setting up a project: rather, it is a source of information and support.

Project origins

In 1990, the Institute for Aboriginal Development received Federal Government grants for one year for the development of language and culture school curricula for two different language groups in Central Australia. It also had to develop a graded set of reading materials; and all the work was to be done with schools in the Arrernte communities whose students have Arrernte as their first language.

The first lesson we learned was that the work couldn't be done in one year, if it was to be done properly – that is, if the teachers and communities were to be involved in the process of curriculum and materials development. We continued the work for a second year by funding it ourselves but we had to look for alternative funding to complete it. So our second lesson was that it is not ideal to try to keep complex work like this running while simultaneously looking for funds.

When we approached the Foundation for funding, we believed that the work we proposed fell within their criteria for funding. It may seem obvious but there is no point in making applications to organisations that don't fund what you want to do; it is also pointless to change what you want to do solely to suit funders' criteria.

Our application generated a dialogue between ourselves and the Foundation, a dialogue which explored many points and so helped us to clarify our thinking about the operation of the project. From this developed a working relationship which is a resource for us and a learning experience for the Foundation. The lesson here is to maintain good communications with funders.

Clarifying aims, operations and outcomes

However, in putting together our application for the funding needed to complete the project, we were able to draw on the work we had already done. This gave a clarity to our aims and outcomes: we knew what we wanted to achieve and we knew how we could achieve it. So our third lesson was that clarity in these areas is essential for both the project and potential funders.

Setting up controls

Aboriginal people in Australia have often been the recipients of programmes developed for them by outsiders, and set up with outsiders' ideas about what is needed and how it should work. People have not been in control of their educational needs often enough. We strongly believed that this project must be different and so, from the beginning, we set up a management and operational structure that reflected real Arrernte control of the project and included all the participants in the project. As a result, *Intelyape-Iyape* is managed by a committee of four Arrernte people drawn from the schools and institutions involved in the work. Long distances mean that we have had to work hard at maintaining this structure, ensuring that meetings are held, people are consulted and all important decisions are made by the management committee. There were times when the project would have collapsed or lost the support of Aboriginal people if this structure were not in place and working. The lesson is obvious: make sure the right people make the decisions.

Using experts

We have an advisory committee of recognised experts in the field of Aboriginal languages or curriculum development but they do not oversee our operations or undermine the main decision-making body of Arrernte people. They help us in practical ways in our development workshops. For example, if we are having a workshop to develop the language strand of the curriculum we invite the linguists and language educators to help us run it. It's a mutually beneficial relationship: they learn too.

Right: *Aboriginal languages in education*, edited by Deborah Hartman and John Henderson, brings together a wide variety of programme descriptions and articles about central themes in this key area.

Its purpose is to promote discussion and idea sharing between existing programmes; and to provide advice to those considering starting new programmes.

One of its strengths is that the editors have allowed the people who actually do the work to present their ideas and experiences themselves. This gives the book enormous authority while offering countless insights into the realities of their working and reflecting environments.

These are neatly complemented by a brief presentation of the main issues which have emerged.

Aboriginal languages in education, Hartman D and Henderson J, 1994. ISBN 0-949659-73-8. IAD Press, PO Box 2531, Alice Springs,NT 0871, Australia. AUS$39.95

Choosing the staff

From the beginning we felt that an Arrernte project should have a majority of Arrernte staff: that the day to day life of the project should reflect Arrernte priorities and time frames. This was not achieved until recently. Now we have five staff – of whom three are Arrernte – and the change in the project has been dramatic: our relationships with Arrernte teachers has deepened and our contact with Arrernte communities is increasing.

Just as significant, the cross-cultural and power issues which exist between Arrernte people and anglo-Australians (white Australians descended from immigrants) are now constantly on our agenda in real and practical ways. From this we know that, if this project is to be successful, we must develop good ways of working together that empower Arrernte people and ensure that all our personalities, skills and abilities are recognised and valued. With the support of the management committee, we are working on this and are documenting our thinking.

Appropriate processes

We have developed a cycle of curriculum development that is based on an action research and community development model. The model ensures that the curriculum is being developed from the ground up by elders, parents and Arrernte teachers, so is truly based in the cultural knowledge that the community wants the children to learn. It also comes from the knowledge and daily experience of the Arrernte teachers and we trust that they know how to teach their children. We are documenting their pedagogy as part of our development model.

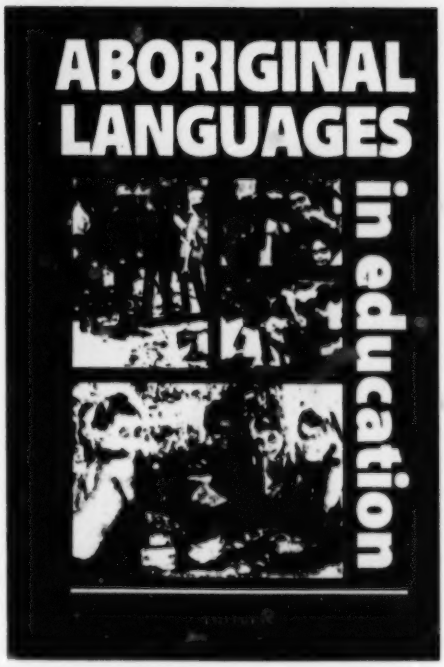
Evaluation

In our recent self evaluation of our work we realised that we have neglected some steps and that this has weakened our project operations and outcomes. However, it has also confirmed to us that the model is a good one and that we need to be more rigorous in implementing it as we planned to do.

Regular feedback – for example, from workshops – is also invaluable to us as it helps us to plan and allocate time and resources to areas of current need in the schools. We also have built in yearly evaluation workshops where we concentrate on both successes and areas that need more work. Next we hope to set up a team of evaluators as 'critical friends' who are sympathetic to our aims and will help us to achieve our outcomes.

Networking

Being funded by the Foundation brings many benefits. For example, being part of a world wide network is very useful and supportive because we receive regular newsletters, issue papers and information about other projects. We also have had visits from several other projects and will visit some ourselves in the near future. This helps break down the isolation of being involved in a small project. It also brings responsibilities to share our work with others and keep in contact with the network and the Foundation.



Accountability

Our first line of accountability is to the Arrernte people and their children. However, we are also accountable to the Foundation as funder. One heartening aspect of the Foundation is that it is very interested in reports that reflect the realities of the work, good and bad; and in helping us to overcome any problems. Report writing therefore becomes something positive rather than an onerous task.

It also expects the finances to be in order, because it knows that financial problems can quickly destroy a project and its work. To help us in this, we are attached to *Yipirinya* School, an incorporated Aboriginal organisation that can give us regular financial services, including audited accounts.

Conclusion

In summary, our experience has shown that a project can run fairly smoothly if attention is paid to the following factors from the beginning: the aims and outcomes; the management structure; the staffing; the processes of project operation; evaluation; and accountability.

This does not mean that nothing will go wrong and that there will be no need for change. Our experience shows that many things can happen in the life of a project. So far we have had new babies, deaths in the families, changes in staff and many changes in our plans. But we are still working to meet our original aims.

Kele mwavre Urreke arritvenenghe! (OK; that's it; see you later!) ⌟

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Report from the field

When Irish eyes are smiling

Ruth Hopkins

'... I've never been that far away from home before and I was a bit unsure of what the people would be like...'

In this article Ruth Hopkins, Project Leader of the Cynon Valley Project Wales, draws out the realities and the many important details of a visit by members of the project to The Togher Pre-school and Family Centre across the sea in Ireland.

In June 1994, 15 representatives from the Foundation-supported Cynon Valley Project, Wales, sailed from Wales to visit the Togher Pre-school and Family Centre in Ireland which is also supported by the Foundation. The idea was to get new ideas, share experiences, benefit from the lessons learned by the Togher Project in its longer history, and to experience a different culture. The visit arose from a workshop organised by the Foundation in Galway in June 1993 when staff from the two projects met and committed themselves to such an exchange.

'... the biggest impression on me was the relation that the Centre has with the Police, something we could maybe aim for ...'

When the promise at last became a reality, a lottery was held to select participants. The visiting group comprised 12 representatives from the two estates where the project works; with two Save the Children staff and a local Health Visitor. Several planning meetings were held as a complete group, and a list of agreed ground rules were drawn up for the trip: these were mostly observed by everyone.

During these meetings it became apparent that there were various levels of anxiety about breaking away from home and visiting a 'strange' country. However, they found support from within the group: the only male participant knew Ireland and did his best to reassure everyone about the warm welcome ahead of them.

'...Before the trip, I worried a lot, wondering if I could cope with being away from my children...'

The programme for the visit provided opportunities for all to learn something about the social and cultural differences of the country, and allowed the group to gain knowledge of the locality in which the Family Centre is based. They also had an insight into the running of the centre and were able to make comparisons with what there is back home.

'... I learned that when we make rules and plans we don't as a committee follow things through and we flaunt every ground rule we have...'

It was not all serious, purposeful learning however: Irish hospitality was marvellous throughout the trip; and the food and an establishment called 'The Pink Elephant' still loom large in conversation! Irish dancing, communal singing and a trip to the Blarney Stone* were all highlights; and the shared enjoyment and relaxation cemented the friendship formed between individuals and the two projects.

'... Similarities to areas in Wales, but some things are medieval, eg: Social Services – it doesn't seem to exist ... They only have 5 Social Workers for 147,000 people ...'

Many tales are now part of the Cynon Valley Project's folklore – some of which cannot be shared with those left behind! It was a special experience and our friends from Togher made it so.

'... I came away feeling so positive about where I want to go with the project at home, so enthusiastic to really take this somewhere, to share it with our mothers in our community. I also felt very proud with what we had already achieved in our deprived area of Mid-Wales...'

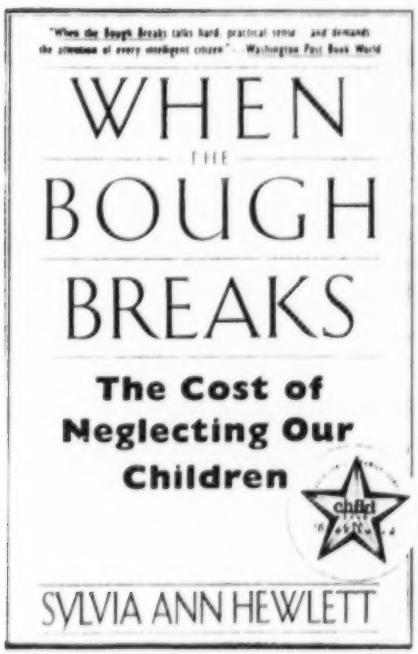
Since the trip, individuals have acknowledged it as a valuable learning experience and it's clear that the benefits of such visits are lasting ones. This one, for example, has made an impact on individuals and spurred them on in their efforts back home. One decided that she must do something with her life and is now in full time employment; others have redoubled their efforts to improve the facilities and services on their estates; and, for all, there has been a change in perspective. They saw 'home' from a long way away, and saw clearly what they already had and what they wanted in the future. Their commitment was strengthened.

'... it has made me appreciate the things we have... and hopefully by seeing what they did in their family centre and how they all pulled together we can pull together and make our family centre work well...'

* An ancient Irish stone which gives anyone who kisses it the gift of persuasion. Project leaders ***don't*** need to kiss it (ed).

Resources

When the bough breaks: the cost of neglecting our children



The focus of this book is children in poverty and deprivation in the United States. Ms Hewlett poses the question: 'Is it fair to spend 22.9 per cent of the federal budget on those over 65 (with a poverty rate of 4 to 12 per cent) but only 4.8 per cent on those under 18 (with a poverty rate of 17 to 20 per cent)?'

Child victims of divorce, children living in crime, infested inner city neighbourhoods, the State's failure to invest adequate public resources in children, and diminishing parental time are some of the aspects explored at length. In questioning policies, legislation and programmes the author raises several issues that are relevant across cultures. For example, the double-edged nature of the widely-held view that the state must not enter the precincts of the home or interfere in the family.

The author manages to blend facts and figures about children with the human tragedy of their lives. She makes the case for the state's responsibility to provide an adequate legal framework for the protection of children and for services to support children and parents – especially women who have to balance careers with child rearing. She also makes clear her own partiality for traditional family values.

When the bough breaks: the cost of neglecting our children, Sylvia Ann Hewlett; 1992, ISBN 0-06-097479-6; New York, Harper Perennial

Confident Parents, Confident Children: policy and practice in parent education and support

This book starts from the view that being a parent is the most important task that most of us perform and yet it is the one for which we are least prepared. It then explores the roles that preparation, education and support play in improving the confidence and skills of parents, relating these to challenges and changes in society and in family patterns; before going on to consider the skills that are involved in parenting and what can be done to make parenting more enjoyable and more satisfying.

The book is drawn from the United Kingdom and its review of the support services is UK specific. However, there are parallels with those in other countries too; while its detailed Agenda for Action is much more universal in its application. Here there is a focus on communities developing coordinated approaches to support for parents which involve a wide range of agencies and concentrate on prevention rather than cure.

Confident Parents, Confident Children: policy and practice in parent education and support, Gillian Pugh, Erica De'ath and Celia Smith; 1994, ISBN 1-874579-37-7; National Children's Bureau, UK

CONFIDENT PARENTS,
CONFIDENT CHILDREN
Policy and practice in parent education and support
Gillian Pugh, Erica De'Ath and Celia Smith

Getting ready for school

CHETNA has been involved in training teachers and workers in the field of ECD and women's empowerment for over a decade and this book reflects that depth of experience. It is a manual for caregivers of young children (up to school age) that is drawn from practice, and thus is of direct use in the field. The aim was to create something that would serve to guide rather than dictate activities; and to complement that with a number of selected examples. It especially stresses the need to review and adapt activities according to local circumstances, and to modify them, improvise upon them and develop new ones.

Getting ready for school, 1994; CHETNA, Lilavatiben Lalbhai's Bungalow, Civil Camp Road, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad-380 004, Gujarat, India

(continued on page 24)

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Bernard van Leer Foundation

Newsletter

Number 77 January 1995

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About the Foundation

The Bernard van Leer Foundation is an international, philanthropic and professional institution based in The Netherlands. The Foundation's income is derived from the Van Leer Group of Companies – established by Bernard van Leer in 1919 – a worldwide industrial enterprise of which the Foundation is the principal beneficiary. Created in 1949 for broad humanitarian purposes, the Foundation concentrates on the development of low-cost, community-based initiatives in early childhood care and education for socially and culturally disadvantaged children from birth to eight years of age.

The Foundation provides financial support and professional guidance to governmental, academic and voluntary bodies setting up projects to enable disadvantaged children to benefit fully from edu-cational and social development opportunities. The Foundation currently supports approximately 100 major projects in some 40 developing and industrialised countries. The dissemination, adaptation and replication of successful project outcomes are crucial to the Foundation's work.

Grants are not made to individuals nor for general support to organisations. The Foundation does not provide study, research or travel grants. No grants are made in response to general appeals. In accordance with its statutes, the Foundation gives preference to countries in which the Van Leer Group of Companies is established.

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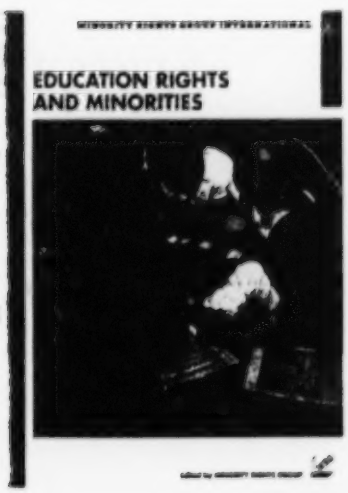

Education rights and minorities

This is the most recent report from the international NGO Minority Rights Group International (MRG). MRG works to secure justice for ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities suffering discrimination, prejudice and violent persecution; and to promote successful cooperation and development of majority and minority communities.

The report shows that, although the importance of the transmission of values and world views of minorities is widely recognised, a large number of complex issues still have to be resolved by policy makers. Usefully, it identifies a number of areas for action. These include: equality of resources for education, the positive advantages of bilingualism and multi-lingualism, and attitude changes in teachers and classroom practice.

Education rights and minorities by Benyani, Graham-Brown, Gundara, Jones, Thornberry and Warner; 1994, ISBN 1-897693-40-0, available from MRG, 378 Brixton Road, London SW9 7DE, UK; price £4.95/US$8.95 + postage

Dear Reader,

Newsletter 79 will be published in July 1995 and its theme will be Participatory Learning

The kinds of points to be considered will include its nature; its application; and its problems.

We particularly welcome examples of participatory learning in practice. Please send contributions to the Communications Section of the Foundation at the above address, by mid May 1995.